



DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION  
HEALTH CARE BULLETIN  
Issued: April 30, 2009

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Swine Influenza (H1N1Virus) Update

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**Audience: All**

The World Health Organization (WHO) met on April 25, 2009 with world health officials to address outbreaks of a new strain of swine influenza. As of 4/29/09 there have been confirmed cases in Arizona (1), California (14), Indiana (1), Kansas (2), Massachusetts (2), Michigan (2), Nevada (1), New York City (51), Ohio (1) and Texas (16) for a total of 91 cases in the US. One death in the US has been reported in Texas. Maryland is reporting six probable cases of the Virus; 3 in Anne Arundel County and 3 in Baltimore County. As yet these are unconfirmed cases by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The Centers for Disease Control has issued an official CDC Health Advisory. A health advisory provides important information for a specific incident or situation. These have been sent to state and local health officers, public information officers, epidemiologists and other clinician organizations.

**FACTS ABOUT SWINE INFLUENZA**

Swine Influenza (Swine Flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs and caused by type A influenza virus that regularly causes flu outbreaks in pigs. It causes a high rate of illness but typically a low death rate. When the flu virus of different species (humans and birds) infects pigs, it mixes with their genes and a new version of flu is created. In this case a new form of swine influenza.

**How is swine flu spread?**

Swine flu is transmitted directly from pigs to people and people to pigs. Human cases are generally from close contact with infected pigs. Person-to-person spreading of the virus is through an infected person coughing or sneezing or through touching something the flu virus is on and touching your mouth or nose.

**Can you get swine flue from eating pork?**

**No.** The virus is not spread through food. All meats should be handled properly and cooked to an internal temperature of 160 degrees to kill all bacteria and viruses.

**Symptoms**

Symptoms are similar to other types of seasonal influenza and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some who have contracted the swine flu have reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, body ache, headache, chills & fatigue, vomiting, and diarrhea. Like seasonal flu it may cause worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

**Diagnosing swine flu virus**

Contact your primary care provider to discuss your symptoms as soon as possible. If you believe you have the flu, let your physician know ahead of time if you will be coming to their office and take precautions such as wearing a mask to avoid spreading the virus to others. A respiratory specimen is collected within the first 4-5 days of the illness. This is the period the person is most contagious and could be spreading the virus. In some cases the person may have the virus for 10 days or longer. The specimen is sent to the CDC laboratory for testing. If you are exposed, you may not notice symptoms for several days.



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Are there treatments for swine flu virus?

You should see your primary care provider regarding the options. There are antiviral drugs that can be prescribed. There are currently four (4) antiviral drugs that are licensed in the US for the treatment of influenza. While most swine influenza viruses have been susceptible to all four drugs, the most recent swine influenza virus isolated from humans are resistant to at least two of the current antiviral drugs. There are no current vaccines to protect humans from swine flu. The CDC states that the "seasonal influenza vaccine will likely help provide partial protection against swine H3N2 but not swine H1N1(the new swine flu type)".

Preventative Measures

- **Washing your hands with soap and water**, especially after you cough and sneeze is one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of influenza. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.**
- Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Stay in good health. Get plenty of sleep. Be physically active. Manage your stress. Drink plenty of fluids. Eat nutritious foods.
- Try not to touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- **Stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.**

Additional information and resources:

Information for this bulletin provided by:  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

District of Columbia Department of Health (DOH)  
[http://doh.dc.gov/doh/site/default.asp?dohNav\\_GID=1787](http://doh.dc.gov/doh/site/default.asp?dohNav_GID=1787)  
<http://newsroom.dc.gov/show.aspx?agency=doh&section=17&release=16843&year=2009&file=file.aspx%2frelease%2f16843%2fSwineFlufactsheet.pdf>

World Health Organization (WHO)  
<http://www.who.int/en/>

National Institutes of Health (NIH) (This is a very comprehensive list of reliable websites providing current information on the swine flu virus)  
<http://nihlibrary.nih.gov/Announcements/swineflu.htm>